

REMARKS

Claims 1, 16 have been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of Claims 9, 18, respectively. Accordingly, Claims 9, 18 have been canceled and Claims 10-11, 15, 19, 36 have been amended to change dependencies.

Claims 23, 37 and Claims 20, 42 have been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of Claim 9 and Claim 18, respectively. Further, features of Claims 1, 16, 20, 23, 37 and 42 have been deleted and represented as new dependent Claims 50-55, respectively. Claims 8 and 17 have been amended for consistency with the amendments to Claims 1, 16, respectively. All Claim amendments herein are directed toward matters of form and thus are unrelated to patentability.

Request for Examiner Interview.

Should the Examiner be of the opinion that this Amendment does not place the Application in a condition for allowance, Applicants respectfully request an Examiner Interview to resolve any outstanding issues the Examiner may have prior to issuance of yet another Office Action.

Applicants note that the Examiner has issued seven substantive Office Actions in the present application. See the Office Actions dated: (1) June 10, 2002; (2) March 12, 2003; (3) September 12, 2003; (4) April 21, 2004; (5) May 20, 2004; (6) January 27, 2005; and (7) July 27, 2005.

Applicants remind the Examiner that, as set forth in MPEP 707.02, eighth edition, Rev. 3, August 2005, page 700-112:

The supervisory patent examiners should impress their assistants with the fact that the shortest path to the final disposition of an application is **by finding the best references on the first search and carefully applying them.**

The supervisory patent examiners are expected to personally check on the pendency of every application which is up for **the third or subsequent \*>Office<**

**action with a view to finally concluding its prosecution.** (Emphasis added.)

Further, as set forth in MPEP § 707.07(g), eighth edition, Rev. 3, August 2005, page 700-125:

Piecemeal examination should be avoided as much as possible.

1) Allowable Subject Matter.

The Examiner states:

Claims 9-11, 15, 18, 19 and 36 objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. (Office Action, page 2.)

As set forth above, Claims 1, 23, 37 and Claims 16, 20, 42 have been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of Claim 9 and Claim 18, respectively.

Accordingly, Claims 1, 16, 20, 23, 37 and 42 are allowable. Claims 2-8, 10-15, 24-36, 50, which depend from Claim 1, are allowable for at least the same reasons as Claim 1. Claims 17, 19, 38-41, 51, which depend from Claim 16, are allowable for at least the same reasons as Claim 16. Claims 22, 43, 52, which depend from Claim 20, are allowable for at least the same reasons as Claim 20. Claims 44-47, 53, which depend from Claim 23, are allowable for at least the same reasons as Claim 23. Claim 54, which depends from Claim 37, is allowable for at least the same reasons as Claim 37. Claim 55, which depends from Claim 42, is allowable for at least the same reasons as Claim 42. In summary, Claims 1-8, 10-17, 19-20, 22-47, 50-55, i.e., all pending claims, are allowable.

For the above reasons, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection to Claims 10-11, 15, 19, and 36 and reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 1-8, 12-14, 16, 17, 20, 22-35, 37-47 as

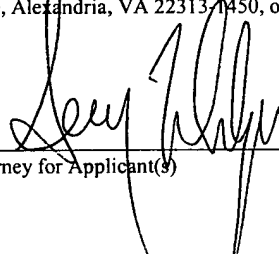
being unpatentable over Ferri et al. (6,262,480) in view of  
Burns (5,566,051).

Conclusion

Claims 1-8, 10-17, 19-20, 22-47, 50-55 are pending in the  
application. For the foregoing reasons, Applicants  
respectfully request allowance of all pending claims. If the  
Examiner has any questions relating to the above, the Examiner  
is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned Attorney  
for Applicant(s).

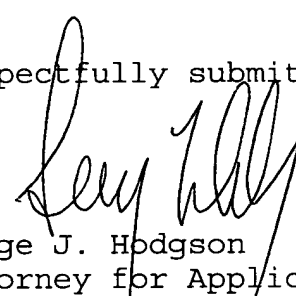
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Attorney for Applicant(s)

October 24, 2005  
Date of Signature

Respectfully submitted,

  
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